

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

THE EXTENSION SERVICE AND CORN-HOG ADJUSTMENT

A radio talk by Dr. C. W. Warburton, Director of Extension Work, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, January 22, 1934.

--00-00--

For a good many years now, the Federal Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture has been giving farmers all over the United States scientific knowledge about such matters as sanitation and disease control, use of better seed and more efficient farm management. This work is of course cooperative, the Department, the State Colleges of Agriculture and the counties all contributing. Up until the past year, however, neither extension workers nor farmers have ever had an opportunity to tie these projects for individual benefit in with a broader program for all farmers. Finally the improvement in farm practices that unrelated efforts made here and there began to be cancelled out by the increase in farm output which the unplanned application of these practices stimulated. Mainly because of the necessity of meeting interest and taxes most farmers in recent years have used efficient methods for the purpose of increasing output. This tendency, of course, has helped to create and maintain excess farm production. Although our severe loss in export trade in recent years is primarily responsible for the excess production problem, every little bid of individual efficiency applied toward increasing the output per man simply made matters worse.

Extension workers long ago saw the necessity for helping farmers tie in with a sound National production schedule, but for many years no possibility of realizing such a scheme existed, at least for the major crops. When the Agricultural Adjustment Act was passed last spring, extension workers recognized in this law the awaited opportunity for helping farmers to a much greater extent than they had ever been able to do in the past. The Agricultural Adjustment Act gave farmers an opportunity to organize their production on a sound basis and in line with actual effective demand. It gave them an opportunity to leave the hit-or-miss system of the past and go forward to a plan under which each farmer will know how to regulate his own production and will share equitably in the total return from the crop.

The first big job attempted by the Administration under this new law was the cotton-plow-up campaign last summer. For a starter that was about as big an order as anyone could wish for. The campaign had to be conducted among more than a million farmers in less than three weeks' time. After signatures to the plow-up agreement had been obtained, there was the job of seeing that the cotton actually was plowed under and that the payment checks were distributed. In this campaign, extension workers gave yeoman service.

In all the production adjustment programs which have been undertaken since, one extremely important item was the accurate explanation of the adjustment agreement and of the reasons why adjustment was necessary. The county agricultural extension agent has been able to help the local people a great deal on this point. Then there has been the problem of handling contracts and other forms which had to do with the adjustment campaign. As a representative of the Department of Agriculture, the extension agents have been called on repeatedly to help all the farmers in their counties.

(over)

They have tried to see that every single farmer in their communities had an opportunity to participate in the Government's adjustment plan and to share in the benefit payments.

This month and next, a new plan, - the corn-hog reduction program for 1934, will be going forward. Actual signing of contracts is about to begin. Once more the Administration is calling upon all agricultural extension agents and other agricultural workers to help with his campaign. The county agent in your county will be on hand at all times to help committeemen and individual farmers with the conduct of the sign-up campaign. The county agent's office will be one of the principal sources of information, just as it was during the cotton and tobacco campaigns and the wheat campaign. Extension workers everywhere are assigned to help with meetings and explain the corn-hog program.

In most corn and hog growing areas, particularly in the Middle West, the corn-hog program will be conducted primarily by the local people themselves, through county and township campaign committees, but the county agent there, as elsewhere, will give much valuable assistance.

We have in the corn-hog program one of the most difficult jobs yet attempted. The problem of dealing with two commodities, so closely inter-related, is admittedly very complex. The matter of obtaining accurate production records which can serve as a reliable basis for production reduction and benefit payments presents real difficulties.

All farmers want to know the facts about the corn-hog program. It is in this connection that the county agent probably will be of most assistance to the local committeemen. In corn and hog counties not now having a regular county agent, emergency workers will be employed for the duration of the campaign with the county and the Government sharing the expenses, just as the wages of regular agents are cooperatively financed. No emergency agent, of course, will be put in a county on a permanent basis without local cooperation and the approval of the farmers concerned. I mention this because I know some localities are under the misapprehension that the Government will force them to hire emergency workers. Where emergency workers are needed, the responsibility for their selection will rest with the Extension Service of the State, subject to the approval of the Federal Cooperative Extension Service.

I wish to assure Farm and Home listeners of the Corn-Hog Sections that the Administration and the Extension workers will be bending every effort this month and next, just as they have since last spring, to help raise the income from corn and hogs. By all working together in fitting our individual plans into a sound schedule for the whole country, I know we can have a degree of agricultural well-being greater than any of us have yet known.